

Thunder Bay Underwater Preserve Committee voted on May 7, 2007 to not support the current Legislative initiative to bring all Michigan bottom lands under the management of the DNR division of State Parks and Recreation. And I was directed to communicate this to the Michigan Underwater Preserve Committee.

We believe this initiative is fundamentally flawed both in inception and implementation. Its backers did not consult or advise any of the existing Underwater Preserves, or to our knowledge, the scuba community at large, or the affected State institutions. Further, as the Legislation was introduced as 3 separate bills in each house simultaneously without the backers publicizing them or the opportunity for public comment is, at the very least, reason enough for suspicion.

In a time of limited funding it seeks, in essence, to replace 11 separate locally funded Michigan Underwater Preserves local management of submerged cultural resources with State Parks and Recreation's management. In the short term this would mean the inability of local Preserves to place the buoys that allow public access to these resources. In the long term these Preserves would lose the local support they have garnered and local initiatives would fade as their management is assumed by the State and result in less public enjoyment of these resources. Claims of the revenue generating capability of the \$15 voluntary yearly Great Lakes State Park sticker are being grossly exaggerated and this idea is nothing that can not be implemented without a legislative mandate.

Please consider these concerns when coming to your own position.

Joseph P. Sobczak, Vice President
Thunder Bay Underwater Preserve Committee